to continue. (See the statements on janitors and cleaners, preschool teachers and child-care workers, and home health and personal care aides elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Employment of private household workers is expected to decline through 2008. However, job openings will be numerous because of the need to replace workers who change jobs within the occupation and the large number of workers who leave these occupations every year. Persons who are interested in and suited for this work should have no trouble finding and keeping jobs.

Earnings

Earnings of private household workers depend on the type of work, the number of hours, household and staff size, geographic location, training, and experience.

Most private household workers are employed part time, or less than 35 hours a week. Some work only 2 or 3 days a week while others may work half a day 4 or 5 days a week. Earnings vary from about $10 an hour or more in a big city to less than the Federal minimum wage—$5.15 an hour in 1998. (Minimum wage laws may not cover private household workers who work just a few hours per week or have very low annual earnings.) In addition, day workers often get carfare and a free meal. Live-in domestics usually earn more than day workers and also get free room and board. However, they often work longer hours. Baby-sitters usually have the lowest earnings.

Usual median weekly earnings of all private household workers in 1998 were $223. Cleaners and servants earned $235 per week, cooks earned $380 per week, child-care workers earned $204 per week, and housekeepers and butlers earned $206 per week. Some full-time live-in housekeepers, cooks, butlers, nannies, and governesses earned considerably more. Based on limited information, experienced and highly recommended workers employed by wealthy families in major metropolitan areas may earn $800 to $1,200 a week.

Private household workers who live with their employers may be given room and board, medical benefits, a car, vacation days, and education benefits. However, most private household workers receive very limited or no benefits.

Related Occupations

Other workers with similar duties are building custodians, hotel and restaurant cleaners, child-care workers, home health and personal care aides, cooks, kitchen workers, waiters and waitresses, and bartenders.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about job opportunities for private household workers is available from local private employment agencies and State employment service offices.

For information about careers and schools offering training for nannies, contact:

☛ American Council of Nanny Schools, Delta College, University Center, MI 48710.

Veterinary Assistants and Nonfarm Animal Caretakers

(O*NET 34058G, 79017A, 79017B, 79017C, 79017D, and 79806)

Significant Points

- Animal lovers get satisfaction in this occupation, but aspects of the work can be unpleasant and physically and emotionally demanding.
- Most animal caretakers are trained on the job, but advancement depends on experience, formal training, and continuing education.

Nature of the Work

Many people like animals. But, as pet owners can attest, taking care of them is hard work. Animal caretakers, sometimes called animal attendants or animal keepers, feed, water, groom, bathe, and exercise animals and clean, disinfect, and repair their cages. They also play with the animals, provide companionship, and observe behavioral changes that could indicate illness or injury.

Boarding kennels, animal shelters, veterinary hospitals and clinics, stables, laboratories, aquariums, and zoological parks all house animals and employ caretakers. Job titles and duties vary by employment setting.

Kennel staff usually care for small companion animals like dogs and cats while their owners are working or traveling out of town. Beginning attendants perform basic tasks, such as cleaning cages and dog runs, filling food and water dishes, and exercising animals. Experienced attendants may provide basic animal health care, as well as bathe animals, trim nails, and attend to other grooming needs. Caretakers who work in kennels may also sell pet food and supplies, assist in obedience training, help with breeding, or prepare animals for shipping.

Animal caretakers who specialize in grooming, or maintaining a pet's—usually a dog's or cat's—appearance are called *groomers*. Some groomers work in kennels, veterinary clinics, animal shelters, or pet supply stores. Others operate their own grooming business. Groomers answer telephones, schedule appointments, discuss with clients their pets' grooming needs, and collect information on the pet's disposition and its veterinarian. Groomers are often the first to notice a medical problem, such as an ear or skin infection, that requires veterinary care.

Grooming the pet involves several steps: An initial brush-out is followed by a first clipping of hair or fur using electric clippers, combs, and grooming shears; the groomer then cuts the nails, cleans the ears,

An animal caretaker enjoys feeding a seal.

bathes, and blow-dries the animal, and ends with a final clipping and styling.

Animal caretakers in animal shelters perform a variety of duties and work with a wide variety of animals. In addition to attending to the basic needs of the animals, caretakers must also keep records of the animals received and discharged and any tests or treatments done. Some vaccinate newly admitted animals under the direction of a veterinarian or veterinary technician, and euthanize (painlessly put to death) seriously ill, severely injured, or unwanted animals. Caretakers in animal shelters also interact with the public, answering telephone inquiries, screening applicants for animal adoption, or educating visitors on neutering and other animal health issues.

Animal caretakers in stables are called *grooms*. They saddle and unsaddle horses, give them rubdowns, and walk them through a cool-off after a ride. They also feed, groom, and exercise the horses, clean out stalls and replenish bedding, polish saddles, clean and organize the tack (harness, saddle, and bridle) room, and store supplies and feed. Experienced grooms may help train horses.

Animal caretakers in animal hospitals or clinics are called *veterinary assistants*. Veterinarians rely on caretakers to keep a constant eye on the condition of animals under their charge. Caretakers watch as animals recover from surgery, check whether dressings are still on correctly, observe the animals' overall attitude, and notify a doctor if anything seems out of the ordinary. Caretakers clean constantly to maintain sanitary conditions in the hospital.

Laboratory animal caretakers work in research facilities and assist with the care of a wide variety of animals, including mice, rats, sheep, pigs, cattle, dogs, cats, monkeys, birds, fish, and frogs. They feed and water the animals, clean cages and change bedding, and observe the animals for signs of illness, disease, or injury. They may administer medications orally or topically according to instructions, prepare samples for laboratory examination, sterilize laboratory equipment, and record information regarding genealogy, diet, weight, medications, food intake, and clinical signs of pain and distress. They work with scientists, physicians, veterinary technicians, veterinarians, and laboratory technicians.

In zoos, caretakers called *keepers* prepare the diets and clean the enclosures of animals, and sometimes assist in raising them when they are very young. They watch for any signs of illness or injury, monitor eating patterns or any changes in behavior, and record their observations. Keepers also may answer questions and ensure that the visiting public behaves responsibly toward the exhibited animals. Depending on the zoo, keepers may be assigned to work with a broad group of animals such as mammals, birds, or reptiles, or they may work with a limited collection of animals such as primates, large cats, or small mammals.

Working Conditions

People who love animals get satisfaction from working with and helping them. However, some of the work may be unpleasant, as well as physically and emotionally demanding, and sometimes dangerous. Caretakers have to clean animal cages and lift, hold, or restrain animals, risking exposure to bites or scratches. Their work often involves kneeling, crawling, repeated bending, and lifting heavy supplies like bales of hay or bags of feed. Animal caretakers must take precautions when treating animals with germicides or insecticides. The work setting can be noisy.

Animal caretakers who witness abused animals or who assist in the euthanizing of unwanted, aged, or hopelessly injured animals may experience emotional stress. Those working for private humane societies and municipal animal shelters often deal with the public, some of whom might react with hostility to any implication that the owners are neglecting or abusing their pets. Such workers must maintain a calm and professional demeanor while they enforce the laws regarding animal care.

Caretakers may work outdoors in all kinds of weather. Hours are irregular: Animals have to be fed every day, so caretakers often work weekend and holiday shifts. In some animal hospitals, research facilities, and animal shelters an attendant is on duty 24 hours a day, which means night shifts. Most full-time caretakers work about 40 hours a week; some work 50 hours a week or more. Caretakers of show and sports animals travel to competitions.

Employment

Animal caretakers and veterinary assistants held about 181,000 jobs in 1998. About 45,000 of the total worked as veterinary assistants in veterinary services. The remainder worked primarily in boarding kennels, but also in animal shelters, stables, grooming shops, zoos, and local, State, and Federal agencies. In 1998, more than 1 out of every 4 animal caretakers was self-employed, and more than 1 in 3 worked part time.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Most animal caretakers are trained on the job. Employers generally prefer to hire people with some experience with animals. Some training programs are available for specific types of animal caretakers, but formal training is usually not necessary for entry-level positions.

Most pet groomers learn their trade by completing an informal apprenticeship, usually lasting 6 to 10 weeks, under the guidance of an experienced groomer. Prospective groomers may also attend one of the 50 State-licensed grooming schools throughout the country, with programs varying in length from 4 to 18 weeks. The National Dog Groomers Association of America certifies groomers who pass a written examination, with a separate part testing practical skills. Beginning groomers often start by taking on one duty, such as bathing and drying the pet. They eventually assume responsibility for the entire grooming process, from the initial brush-out to the final clipping. Groomers who work in large retail establishments or kennels may, with experience, move into supervisory or managerial positions. Experienced groomers often choose to open their own shops.

Beginning animal caretakers in kennels learn on the job, and usually start by cleaning cages and feeding and watering animals. Kennel caretakers may be promoted to kennel supervisor, assistant manager, and manager, and those with enough capital and experience may open up their own kennels. The American Boarding Kennels Association (ABKA) offers a 3-stage, home-study program for individuals interested in pet care. The first two study programs address basic and advanced principles of animal care, while the third program focuses on in-depth animal care and good business procedures. Those who complete the third program and pass oral and written examinations administered by the ABKA become Certified Kennel Operators (CKO).

There are no formal educational requirements for animal caretakers in veterinary facilities. They are trained on the job, usually under the guidance of a veterinarian or veterinary technician. They start by performing tasks related to basic animal health care, such as keeping cages and examination areas sanitary. They also help veterinarians prepare for surgery, sterilize surgical equipment, observe recovering animals, and give medications and basic medical treatment under the directions of a veterinarian or veterinary technician. Highly motivated veterinary assistants may become veterinary technicians, with additional training from one of approximately 70 accredited veterinary technology programs.

Employers of entry-level laboratory animal caretakers generally require a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) test. A few colleges and vocational schools offer programs in laboratory animal science which provide training for technician positions, but such training is not strictly necessary. New animal caretakers working in laboratories begin by providing basic care to laboratory animals. With additional training, experience, and certification, they may advance to more technical positions in laboratory animal care, such as research assistant, mid-level technician, or senior-level technologist.

The American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) offers certification for three levels of technician competence. Those who wish to become certified as Assistant Laboratory Animal Technicians (ALAT) must satisfy education and experience requirements before taking an examination administered by AALAS. Laboratory Animal Technician and Laboratory Animal Technologist are the second and third levels of certification of the AALAS.

Some zoological parks may require their caretakers to have a bachelor's degree in biology, animal science, or a related field. Most require experience with animals, preferably as a volunteer or paid keeper in a zoo. Zoo keepers may advance to senior keeper, assistant head keeper, head keeper, and assistant curator, but few openings occur, especially for the higher-level positions.

Animal caretakers in animal shelters are not required to have any specialized training, but training programs and workshops are increasingly available through the Humane Society of the United States, the American Humane Association, and the National Animal Control Association. Workshop topics include cruelty investigations, appropriate methods of euthanasia for shelter animals, and techniques for preventing problems with wildlife. With experience and additional training, caretakers in animal shelters may become adoption coordinators, animal control officers, emergency rescue drivers, assistant shelter managers, or shelter directors.

Job Outlook

Employment opportunities for animal caretakers and veterinary assistants generally are expected to be good. The outlook for caretakers in zoos, however, is not favorable; jobseekers will face keen competition because of expected slow growth in zoo capacity, low turnover, and the fact that the occupation attracts many candidates.

Employment is expected to grow faster than the average through 2008. The growth of the pet population, which drives employment of animal caretakers in kennels, grooming shops, animal shelters, and veterinary clinics and hospitals, is expected to slow. Nevertheless, pets remain popular and pet owners—including a large number of baby boomers whose disposable income is expected to increase as they age—may increasingly take advantage of grooming services, daily and overnight boarding services, and veterinary services, spurring employment growth for animal caretakers and veterinary assistants. Demand for animal caretakers in animal shelters is expected to remain steady. Communities are increasingly recognizing the connection between animal abuse and abuse toward humans, and should continue to commit funds to animal shelters, many of which are working hand-in-hand with social service agencies and law enforcement teams.

Despite growth in demand for animal caretakers, the overwhelming majority of jobs will result from the need to replace workers leaving the field. Many animal caretaker jobs that require little or no training have work schedules that tend to be flexible; therefore, it is ideal for people seeking their first job and for students and others looking for temporary or part-time work. Because turnover is quite high, largely due to the hard physical labor, the overall availability of jobs should be very good. Much of the work of animal caretakers is seasonal, particularly during vacation periods.

Earnings

Median hourly earnings of nonfarm animal caretakers were $7.12 in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between $5.92 and $8.82. The bottom 10 percent earned less than $5.54 and the top 10 percent earned more than $11.39. Median hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of nonfarm animal caretakers in 1997 are shown below:

Local government, except education and hospitals	$10.40
Commercial sports	7.60
Animal services, except veterinary	7.10
Membership organizations, not elsewhere classified	6.60
Veterinary services	6.20

Median hourly earnings of veterinary assistants were $7.79 in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between $6.55 and $9.23. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $5.79 and the top 10 percent earned more than $10.80.

Related Occupations

Others who work extensively with animals include animal breeders, animal trainers, livestock farm workers, ranchers, veterinarians, veterinary technicians and technologists, and wildlife biologists and zoologists.

Sources of Additional Information

For more information on jobs in animal caretaking and control, and the animal shelter and control personnel training program, write to:

☛ The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St. NW., Washington, DC 20037-1598. Internet: **http://www.hsus.org**

☛ National Animal Control Association, P.O. Box 480851, Kansas City, MO 64148-0851.

To obtain a listing of State-licensed grooming schools, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

☛ National Dog Groomers Association of America, Box 101, Clark, PA 16113.

For information on training and certification of kennel staff and owners, contact:

☛ American Boarding Kennels Association, 4575 Galley Rd., Suite 400A, Colorado Springs, CO 80915. Internet: **http://www.abka.com**

For information on laboratory animal technicians and certification, contact:

☛ American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, 9190 Crestwyn Hills Drive, Memphis, TN 38125.

Protective Service Occupations

Correctional Officers

(O*NET 61099E and 63017)

Significant Points

- The work can be stressful because of concern for personal safety.
- Job opportunities are expected to be very favorable due to much faster than average employment growth coupled with high turnover.
- Most jobs are in large regional jails or in prisons in rural areas.

Nature of the Work

Correctional officers are responsible for overseeing individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting trial or who have been convicted of a crime and sentenced to serve time in a jail, reformatory, or penitentiary. They maintain security and inmate accountability in order to prevent disturbances, assaults, or escapes. Officers have no law enforcement responsibilities outside the institution where they work. (For more information on related occupations, see the statement on police and detectives elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Police and sheriffs' departments in county and municipal jails or precinct station houses employ many correctional officers, also known as detention officers. Most of the approximately 3,300 jails in the United States are operated by county governments, with about three-quarters of all jails under the jurisdiction of an elected sheriff. Individuals in the jail population change constantly as